

A
DISCOURSE
Upon the Nature of
ETERNITY,
And the Condition of a
Separated Soul,
According to the Grounds of
REASON;
And Principles of
Christian Religion.

By WILLIAM BRENT of *Grays* Inne, Esq.

The Second Edition :
Reviewed and Corrected by the Author.



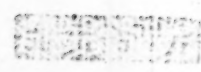
LONDON:

Printed by J. C. for the Author. 1674.

DISCOURSE
UPON THE FLAME OF
ETERNITY.
AND THE CONSUMPTION OF
THE SEPARATED SOUL.

A SERMON
PREACHED AT
ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH,
BY
R. A. S. O. N.

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The P R E F A C E to the Reader.



Empedocles of Agrigentum, being demanded, Why 'twas so hard to finde out a wise man? gave this reason, Because (said he) none can find one out, who is not so himself: thereby inferring, that unless there be a proportion between the Object and the Power, it will never be able to produce the Effects flowing from it.

Upon this ground it may be well concluded, that 'tis impossible for any to give a true Description of Eternity, who hath no subsistence but in Time; and certainly, although some Spirits (sublimated by the daily Contemplation of Eternal things) may perhaps be able to shew us some imperfect Idea's of those perfect Beauties whereon they are enamoured; yet 'tis a meer extravagance in me (who have employed the best part of my time in quest of transitory and fading things) to undertake the handling of a subject, which cannot be worthily expressed by less than an Angel, nor be conceived in this life by Humane kind.

Whilst Hannibal was with the King Antiochus in Ephesus, where they were busied in making preparation for a War against the Romans; he was invited by some of the great Kings Favourites, to hear one Phormio a Philosopher read a Lecture of Military Discipline, and the Duty of a General; and having performed it with the applause of all the Auditory, Hannibal being demanded his opinion of the man, answered, That he had indeed formerly seen divers mad men, but never any one so mad as Phormio; who having never viewed Troops on their march, never spent one night in the Trenches, or performed the least Duty of a Soldier, would notwithstanding take upon himself to order an Army, and prescribe Rules unto a General.

It is certainly much easier to comprehend all Military Knowledge, which is contained in the finite number of some Precepts drawn from Reason and Experience, than fathom the bottomless Abyss of ETERNITY, which holds no proportion at all with the narrow limits and shallowness of Humane Reason; and consequently to undertake the handling of this Subject, is a much greater madness than that of Phormio.

To the Reader.

This being so, I doubt not but there will be some, who, unsatisfied with what I shall set down, will question upon what Grounds I have adventured to publish my Conceptions upon Eternity, so many excellent Pens having already employed themselves in the decyphering of it; and will conclude, that as his error is to be pitied, who, contrary to his expectation, fails (by the weakness of his forces) to perform what he hath undertaken; so his madness is inexcusable, who undertakes what himself knows is not to be performed. I will not go about to justify my self against their reprehensions, which perhaps have truth for their foundation: all I shall say is, I have writen this only for my own private use, that I might at times of leisure view the Discoveries I have made of that Country to which I tend; and on which, Time, at the shutting in of my Lives course, will land me: And I have published it, not as conceiving I could better what others have before writen, but out of an opinion that my Conceits (though short of what hath been delivered) might hit the Humour of some one or other, and waken him from that Lethargie wherein the World holds the most part of men during their lives, that he may look about in time, and provide himself for that Eternal Habitation. Those who are stung with the Tarantula, cannot be cured but by Musick; and I have heard, that 'tis not always the best Tunes help the diseased Patients, but such as (how extravagant soever) sympathize most with their Inclinations.

Reader! Having given thee this account of my self, I proceed briefly to set down the substance of this short Treatise. In the first place, I shall endeavour to let thee know what Eternity is; in the second, to describe what our condition will be in it; and in the last place, to set down such Rules as may (being observed) render us perfectly happy in that fixed condition wherein Eternity will place us. All I require of thee is, That if thou approve not what I write, thou wilt (at least) approve the good will wherewith 'tis written.

Farewel.



A DISCOURSE

Upon the Nature of

Eternitie, &c.



Ne of the Maximes wherein Philosophers (notwithstanding the many different Opinions among them) do accord, is this :

Nihil est in Intellectu, quod non prius fuit in Sensu. That is, Nothing is in our Understanding, which hath not first gained its admittance through the Senses. Our Souls, during the time of their

imprisonment in our Bodies, seem to be so narrowly coopt up by our Senses, who guard all the Avenues by which any intelligence of the great Workmanships of Nature may be conveyed to them, that they get notice of nothing save what is brought to them by their mediation.

Well may the exterior Objects (assisted by the Suns light) fill the Air with the representation of their several *species*; but the Understanding will not be able to know any thing either of their shape, or colour, unless they pass thorow the Eye into the common Sense, and be thence transmitted to the Fancie.

The warbling Choristers of the Air may well cause both the Woods and Valleys eccho with their melodious sounds; and

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all the famous Orators display the utmost Charms of winning Rhetorick : but if our Ears deny them entrance to the Brain, they will at last die in the Air where they were formed, without giving us the least information either of their Harmony or Meaning.

All the rare Spices of the East may well evaporate themselves to nothing before our Eyes, without leaving any other sense of their rich Perfumes, but what our Smelling shall convey unto us. And if another Monarch far surpassing *Abasferus* in the riches and extent of his Dominions, should unpeople the three Elements to furnish out a sumptuous Feast, that might shew forth the greatness of his magnificence ; we were not able to distinguish any of those exquisite Dainties, and delicious Wines, farther than what our Tastes should dictate to us.

In fine, our Souls, notwithstanding their immaterial substance, and the faculties of Will and Understanding, whereby they think themselves equal to the Celestial Spirits, (were but those Gates dammed up whereof our Senses are the Porters) would (like the *Egyptians* during the three days darkness wherewith God plagued them) be forced to sit still ; nor could the heavenly gifts of Reasoning and Resolving avail them ought towards the discovery of Truth or Goodness, which are the only Objects of their Functions.

The Spots we now discover in the Sun, the Valleys in the Moon, and Stars that move in an Epicycle about the Planet *Jupiter*, had been eternally concealed from all Mankind, had not the invention of *Galileus* Perspectives, by aiding the weakness of our Sight, discovered them unto our Eyes. And I am verily perswaded, that all those rare Effects of Nature which we now attribute to Sympathy, to Antipathy, or other occult Causes, are indeed onely Material qualities, but too subtle to be perceived by our Senses : which is the cause that all our rarest Wits are at a fault in quest of them, and pay us onely with Obscure Terms in stead of Truth.

ETERNITY alone, is that can never fall to be the object of our Senses : the infinity of its Duration cannot be comprehended by their finite powers ; and Time doth hurry us away

away so fast over the Race of our Mortality, that we have not the leisure to contemplate its stable Firmness, not subject to those Laws of Ruine by which heaven and earth shall one day perish. This Truth is excellently confirmed unto us by the Apostle, when he saith, that *neither eye hath seen, ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, to conceive the excellencies of what God hath prepared in store for those that fear him.* ETERNITY is surely one of the most precious of all those Blessings; and the *Trisagion*, or Thrice-holy, so much renowned in the Greek Church, as a Hymn delivered to them by the mouths of Angels, *Sanctus Deus, sanctus Fortis, sanctus Immortalis*, puts Immortality in the last place, as complement of the Divine perfections.

When *Moses*, moved with a holy Curiosity, desired he might behold the face of God, he was answered, it was impossible to see that and live: All this beloved Patriarch could obtain, was license to view the glory of his hinder parts in passing by. And what is thereby meant, save onely this: That we may be permitted here on earth to contemplate the Divine Perfections in the Creatures, which are the last and meanest effects of his Power, being produced during the continuance of fleeting Time; but that all solid Joys, together with his Beatifical Vision, are reserved onely for such as fix their habitations in the blest dwelling of ETERNITY.

S. Paul, being through special favour rapt into the third heaven, that he might take a taste of those Celestial pleasures, thinks it not lawful to utter the *Areana*, that is, the sublime and hidden things which he learned there. The greatest height we can attain unto whilst we are here, is to contemplate the Mysteries which shall be there revealed, *per Speculum in enigmate*, through a Glass, in a dark Riddle. What is this Glass, but Faith, by whose assistance our faint Eyes are able without dazling to look upon the Sun of Truth, even God himself, and expound those Riddles that pass the reach of humane understanding.

Relying therefore upon this Guide, I shall begin to search into the nature of ETERNITY, because her Maxims are like a Clue of Thred let down from heaven, to lead us

with security and humbleness into the understanding of Divine Mysteries; that so we may not stray in the wilde Maze of Self-opinion, wherein the greatest part of humane kinde do wander endlessly, and lose themselves at last, being intrapp'd in the pernicious snares of over-weening Pride, or stupid Ignorance.

When the Divines endeavour to describe the Deity unto us, they make us of three sorts of Attributes: the First, as they call them, Negative; the Second, Relative; and the Third, Positive. The First, shew what he is not; and the Second, what he is in relation to us, or to some other being; but the Third, which should declare unto us what he is in Himself, fail to perform it, because all Terms explicate onely our Conceptions, and we can conceive nothing but what is infinitely short of his Perfections. They call him *increated*, and *immortal*, that we may know his Essence is incompatible with whatsoever hath either Ending or Beginning: They term him *Creator*, and *Redeemer*, thereby informing us, that all the Blessings we enjoy here, or expect hereafter, are but dependencies upon his Power. But when they tell us of his Vertues, and of his Wisdom, they intend not that we should thereby understand such Vertues or such a Wisdom as are in us; not an affection or habit of his Will, inclining him to pursue always the dictates of a Right Reason; nor a perspicacity of Judgment, enabling him to distinguish, upon all occasions, the real Truths from those that seem so; (which notwithstanding is the proper meaning of those Terms.) Whereas the Divine Vertues and Wisdom are neither Qualities, nor Habits, but are the very Essence and Being of God himself, which cannot be known or comprehended by any other Nature inferiour to him.

It being therefore admitted, That we can never write or conceive any thing worthily of the Divine Essence; how is it possible I should be able to explicate the nature of ETERNITY, which is the Measure of his Duration, and one of the most excellent of all his Attributes? God himself seems to glory in it, when being asked his Name by the great Patriarch *Moses*, he gives him onely this description of himself,

Ego sum qui sum, I am he that I am, without mentioning either his Power, his Justice, or any of his other Attributes; giving us thereby to understand, that all his other Attributes depend upon his Being, (according to the Order of our Conceptions) as their Foundation: That other things have an existence, whose Beginning flows from his Power, and whose Continuance is an effect onely of his Will: That nothing hath a stable independent Being, save onely he; and that, in fine, no happiness or perfection is to be prized, if the enjoyment of it be not secured unto us by ETERNITY.

This Measure of Gods Being, cannot (by any positive terms which we can use) be comprehended, or defined; nor can it be illustrated to humane understandings, by other means, than by considering the nature of it negatively, and comparatively unto those things which have a being, during the Continuance of time: the first of which considerations, shall be of the Infinity thereof, which (as I said before) is a term purely negative, and represents nothing at all unto our Imaginations; the onely conception we can frame upon it, being of something not circumscribed by ends, or bounds, as are all the Objects which present themselves unto our Senses.

We are astonished, when we consider the vast extent of this habitable earth, which hath sufficed to the production and nourishment of the innumerable number of men now living, or that have had a being, since the Creation of the World; and we are notwithstanding satisfied, both by the demonstrations of Cosmographers, and relations of Navigators, that a full third part of it is yet undiscovered. The immense quantity of Waters in the Ocean, seems to pose Arithmetick, to number all the several drops contained in it: but above all, the Heavens, incircling round this ball made up of earth, water, and the other Elements, and exceeding it so far in bigness, that all of it together bears, in comparison to them, but such proportion (according to the Astronomers computation) as a point in the middle of a Circle to the Circumference, doth with its unmeasurable greatness, out-vie the force of humane understanding, to conceive any

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Idea of its dimensions; and yet, when we consider, but with the least attention, these great workmanships of God, and search into the nature of them, we must needs be satisfied they are not infinite; for that consisting (as our senses can inform us) of finite parts, themselves must likewise be of the same nature with the parts wherof they are composed. Who is it that perceives not, when he takes up a shovel-full of earth from the ground, or but a dish of water out of the Sea, that those portions of these two Elements are finite; and that our not being able to find out their certain quantity, proceeds not from any contradiction in their natures, to be surveyed, or measured, but onely from the weakness of our forces? who is it that can doubt, when he perceives the Sun draw neerer to us, but that the distance between us and him is finite? since were it otherwise, it were not capable of increase, or diminution. And who, in fine, can make a Question but that the Heavens are Circumscribed by certain bounds and limits, when he beholds them to be perpetually measured by the Sun, Moony and the other Planets, in their several motions, according to whose different rates, we give beginning and ending unto our Hours, Days, Months, Years, and to our Ages.

Archimedes was of opinion he could have moved the World, had there been any other place out of it, upon which he might have fixed his Instrument; and I am certainly persuaded, that when we shall be freed out of this Cage of earth, wherein our Souls are inclosed during this life, we shall with ease be able to survey and comprehend the Heavens, the Earth, and all the other workmanships of Nature, that now appear to be so far beyond the reach of humane understanding. And yet when our enlarged Souls shall have the power to circle Earth, sound Hell, and measure all the vast extent of Heaven, how little, or rather nothing at all, will that appear, being compared unto Infinity? If we were able to number all the drops of water in the Sea, and count the sands upon the shores, and if for every one of them we were to live an age before we died, yet were this term as nothing, being compared unto Eternity, since Time would at last consume all that large stock

of our Subſtance; and Eternity, when that were paſt, would ſtill continue conſtant in the full poſſeſſion of all its being.

Aristotle was of opinion, the World wherein we live had no beginning, and ſhould never have an ending; perſwaded thereunto, by the inceſſant viciffitude of generation and corruption, and the ſetled courſe of Nature, which perpetuates all the ſeveral Species, or kinds of things, notwithstanding the continual decay of the individuals, whereof they are compoſed. If this imagination of his were true, it would then follow, that the duration of the World ſhould be indeed perpetual, but not Infinite; and that it would have nothing in it, approaching to the pure ſimplicity of an eternal being: for if Time be divided (as reaſon, experience, and the opinion of all Philoſophers, aſſure us 'tis) into paſt, preſent, and to come; how can that (though ne'r ſo far extended) be without end, whoſe very Being conſiſts in a perpetual flux of Ending and Beginning? or how can that be without bounds, whoſe two parts, that is, the Firſt and Laſt, are not at all; and whoſe Third part (wherein onely it ſubſiſts) is circumscribed within ſuch narrow limits, that we can hardly think a thought, during the term of its duration? And what reſemblance can there be in it of Eternity? the one being in a continual motion, and the other in a conſtant quiet; the one perpetually changing, and the other never ſubject to alteration; and the one, in ſine, ſubſiſting onely in the ſhort inſtants of the preſent time, whereas the other comprehends all times paſt, preſent, and to come, in the pure ſimplicity of a preſent being. From this Ground, there ariſeth another conſideration of the nature of Eternity, that is, of the Indivifi- bility thereof; which I make the ſubject of my next Reſle- ction.

Indivifiability is a term alſo Negative, which represents unto us onely ſomething that cannot be parcelled out by portions, as the things of this inferiour world may be. *Divide & Impera*, that is, Divide and govern, is a Maxime ſucceſſfully practiſed by the Politicians, when making uſe of the private aſſentions either of a Citie or a Commonwealth, they obtain and preſerve thereby their Dominion over all the diſſering Par-

Parties. And we may also with the same truth affirm this rather, *Divide & Destroy*, Divide and Destroy. G O D, who is the Creator of whatsoever hath an existence, being himself One by the simplicity of his nature, hath placed the subsistence of all things in Unity; and hath therefore, by a working peculiar only to himself, united the contraries of Heat and Cold, Drought and Moisture, unto the making up of all the several Bodies, either sensible or insensible, which are contained in the rich Treasury of Nature. Whilst they continue united by this Bond, so long they are said to be: but if the Union be once broken, either by external violence, or the inward working of the different qualities whereof the Body is composed; then doth it forthwith lose the former being, and becomes some other thing, according to the nature of the new form which it acquires. As long as our bodies remain to entertain our souls, by the due temperature of the humours and disposition of the organs to receive her operations, we continue to be men: but when that ceaseth, either by inward distemper, or outward force, we then leave to be so; our souls becoming separated forms, and our bodies returning to the common mass of Matter, from whence they are extracted. The same we see happens in Beasts, Plants, and in all other inanimate bodies, of what nature or quality soever: for there can be no Conclusion truer than this, That whatsoever is already divided, hath left to be what it was formerly: whatsoever may be divided, is subject to decay and ruine; and whatsoever is indivisible, must also of necessity, by reason of the simplicity of its nature, be eternal.

ETERNITY is therefore indivisible; and all those happy persons who have gained that blessed Port, are always in possession of their whole being; they loose nothing of what is past, they want nothing of what is future; but the perfect in that Celestial country doth comprehend, after an unexpected manner, all those Three different and incompatible parts into which Time is divided. And hence it is, that all the happiness found there is true and solid, because those different Goods are united in that fixed Mansion, which being here divided, mislead the greatest part of Humane kind.

search they make after the Chiefest Good, and feed us
with appearances in stead of truth.

Good is the simplest of all other Beings, and is therefore not
looked for here, where nothing doth subsist but is com-
pounded: And all those things which are so eagerly pursued,
men, for the resemblance they have to Good, are but like
worms, which cheat us as we wander in the night, and
bring forth a lustre equal to that of the most precious Gems,
in themselves nought else but Rottenness and Putrefac-
tion.

We are divided almost into as many Opinions as Persons;
every one seeks Happiness (which is the chiefest Good) a
several way, in the variety of their own Appetites; neglecting
Sterility, which is the onely place where it resides;

Some hunt after Power and Sovereign Command, expect-
ing to finde true Contentment in Authority. But alas! how
mistakenly are they mis-guided by Ambition? The Cares of
governing, and Dangers that accompany a Scepter, so far
outweigh the happiness found in it, that *Augustus Caesar*,
who enjoyed the Empire of the World in the most settled
times it ever saw, made it his daily suit unto the Senate, that
it might be restored unto the Quiet of a private life. And
Julian the Apostate having generously cast off the Yoke of Ruling o-
thers, refused to return again unto the Glorious Servitude;
testifying that he found more pleasure among the Cabbages
growing in his solitary Garden, than Twenty years Com-
mand over the *Roman* Empire had yielded to him.

Others there are, whose thoughts are wholly taken up in
gathering Wealth, as if that were the onely thing to be de-
sired; never considering, (so grossly are they blinded by
their Covetousness) that the Content of Riches consists not
in the hoarding up of Treasures, but in the liberal distribu-
tion of them: that the sordid ways of gathering Money, ren-
ders them odious to others; and the restless care of keeping
destroys the quiet they would establish in themselves: That
their continual negotiation about Gain, hinders them from
enjoying the happiness of life; and that, in fine, when they
have reaped the plentiful Harvest of all their labours, they

must resign it unto others, who longing to enjoy the
ous spoil, think their lives tedious, and their deaths welcome.
I forbear to mention the infinite number of mischiefs
the possession of Riches hath brought upon the owners.
many are there, who (like *Seneca*) have in hoarding up
sures, been careful to get together the instruments of their
ruine? finding at last by experience, that to be the cause
of their deaths, wherein they had established the contentment
of their lives. This is a truth so evidently certain, that
Philosophers onely, and Votaries, have been able to discourse
the impossibility of them, but even whole Nations have agreed
upon it. The inhabitants of the *Belcarick* Islands, now called
Majorca and *Minorca*, drowned all their Gold and Silver in the
Ocean; and the *Spartans* (one of the most flourishing Com-
monwealths that ever were) banished those Metals out of the
confines of their Territories; forbidding the enjoyment
them to all their Citizens; as being incompatible with
Contentment.

Some place their happiness in Pleasure; and shew
whatsoever hath the shew of Trouble, give themselves wholly
up to Sensual delights. Fond fools! who blinded by
their Bestial appetites, think themselves happy men in per-
forming those actions, which deprive them of the dignity
being Reasonable creatures, and cast them down into the
of Beasts; unworthy of enjoying Souls made after the
vine likeness, since they employ their whole time in giving
satisfaction to their Bodies. And yet how short are the
few minutes of Contentment which they enjoy, whilst they
abandon themselves to their Debauches, being compared
those of Trouble, which necessarily accompany the Pleasure
they hunt after? The Drunkard will assure us, that the pain
he suffers in his head and stomach, is of much longer con-
nuance, than was the taste of that delicious Wine wherein
made a Shipwrack of his Reason. The Passion, whether
feigned or real, which a Libidinous man acts or suffers for
desired Beauty, and the solicitous endeavours used by him
for obtaining of his Prey, far outweigh the momentary
Pleasure he enjoys; which notwithstanding is attended with

erise of Conscience from within; and the apprehensions of
anger and Dishonour from abroad: Diseases (the effect of
Disorders) take up a settled quarter in their bodies, and
that the constant Mansion of grief and pain, where
intended to have given admittance unto nought but joy
pleasure: and for a complement of their misfortunes,
Vices, like a raging fire, consuming all those excellencies
which God and Nature have bestowed upon them, brand
them with a perpetual Blot of Infamy to all posterity, and
an everlasting Guilt upon their Souls.

Samson had a prodigious strength, infinitely surpassing
that of other men; seconded by an excess of Courage, which
rendered him victorious over Lions, and triumphant in the
confrontation of an Host of men: his single person was of
more value than an Army: But when he suffered himself to
be conducted by his Passion, the love of *Dalila* having first
unfolded his Reasons eyes, deprived him after of his cor-
poreal sight, betrayed him to his enemies, and reduced him
to great a height of misery, that to be freed from the con-
tempt to which he was exposed, he was constrained to employ
matchless Force, in working his revenge by his own
hand.

Sardanapalus (last of the *Assyrian* Monarchs) saw himself
securely settled in the chief Empire of the World; but ha-
ving once given himself over to his effeminate pleasures, the
love of Lust first kindled in his own heart, quickly destroyed
the respect of him in the mindes of Neighbour-Princes, and
his own Subjects; and after taking hold on the magnificent
he had caused to be erected, reduced to ashes both his per-
son and his Empire.

Alexander (justly surnamed *the Great*, for his unparallel'd
bravery, Conduct, and Fortune) was mounted to so great a
height of Glory, that he despised the World, as a place too
narrow to bound the limits of his Conquests; and yet the
treachery of his friend *Clitus*, which he committed in his
rankness, rendered all these Prosperities so unfavoury
to him, that he attempted the killing of himself; and begat
in an aversion against him in the mindes of divers of his

Subjects, that they prepared a Poyson for him, which short the course of all his Victories, buried his Triumphs therewith his carcase in the Grave.

Solomon received from God the gift of an incomparable Wildome, above all the men that ever were; and with the confluence of all those Blessings which might raise Human nature unto the greatest height of Happiness, whereof capable during this mortal life: but the inordinate love of men, to which he was addicted in his latter time, drew his Issue of the greater part of his Terrestrial Kingdom himself, (as some do probably conjecture) of the Eternal of Heaven.

Why should I farther instance the single punishment of Particular Voluptuous persons? 'Tis so prodigious a madness for Man to place his Chiefest Good in Sensual lust, that it hath drawn down Fire from Heaven for the consuming of whole Cities, and Water from the Earth and Firmament, which was upon the point to have extirpated Mankind; the different Elements conspiring to revenge that injustice which is done to their Creator, when we neglect his law engraven in our Souls, to satisfy the fleshly part of us, with nothing else but dust and ashes.

And to conclude, even *Epicurus* the Philosopher, who placed the Chiefest good of Man in pleasure, did notwithstanding (if we believe *Seneca*, rather than some others who have calumniated him) esteem that Pleasure to consist in the Golden Rule of Temperance, and not in the exorbitant use of Wine, Play, of Gluttony and Women.

I have exceeded in handling this Particular, the brevity I had proposed unto myself; because these are the Men which by the glittering brightness of their deceitful pleasures dazzle the eyes of our unwary Youth, and like so many Wandering Fires, mislead us in our search for Happiness, through the blinde paths of Ignorance and Folly, until at last they train us into the dangerous Precipices of Wickedness and damnation, from whence we are not able (without particular assistance of the Divine grace) to free our selves, for all Eternity.

All other things so greedily grasped at by Worldly men, may be reduced unto the before-mentioned Heads, of Power, of Riches, and of Pleasure. Nobility, Fame, and Respect, are the attendants upon Power; Sufficiencie and Plenty wait upon Riches; Health, Strength, and Beauty, are necessarily required to the compleating of our Pleasures. And therefore what false appearance soever of Happiness they may hold forth to our deluded mindes, they cannot possibly give us that true Content, which is not to be found in these principal things, whereunto they are but Accessories.

Power, Riches, Pleasure, and the rest, have indeed some resemblance of Good, but are not that which they resemble: for Good, or Happiness (being the same) consists not in possessing many different things, but in the union of all together; whereas they are so far from being one, that they are inconsistent with each other.

The weight of Business, and distance kept by Sovereign Princes, for maintaining the Reverence due to their Calling, permits them not the sweet delights of Pleasure, to which the freedom of Equality is requisite; and the vastness of their Expence, in Wars, in Treaties, for Intelligence, and other things incident to their Authority, makes them the neediest almost of all other men. The wary Closeness of the rich Miser (inconsistent with Popularity) hinders him from being Powerful; and his daily employment about the increasing of his Store, debars him from the use of Pleasure, which cannot be had without the expence of Time and Money. The seriousness of Great affairs disturbs the quietness of Pleasures, and the prodigality of Luxury wastes the estates of those that are addicted to it.

In fine, which way soever we turn our selves, to seek Contentment in satisfaction of our Lustful Appetites, these divided Goods, which cannot dwell together in one Subject, frustrate our Expectations, and enforce us to confess with the Wise-man, That whatsoever hath a being during the Continuance of Time, is *Vanity of vanities, and nought but Vanity*. For if by a particular Indulgence of God and Nature, these divided (and as I have already shewed) incompatible Blessings of
Power,

Power, Riches, Pleasure, Respect, Nobility, Fame, Beauty, Health and Strength, should fall to be the portion of one man; what were all these advantages, without Security in the Enjoyment of them, but vanity, and meer vexation of our spirits? and what Security can this life possibly afford, amidst the daily apprehensions of being deprived of them before we die, and certainty to lose them when we descend into the Grave?

Our blessed Saviour therefore adviseth *Martha* not to divide her thoughts, in the solicitous quest of many things, since what was necessary was onely One: and that we might not be to seek what that one, single, necessary thing should be, himself informs us in another place what 'tis, when he commands us to seek first the kingdom of heaven by just and righteous actions; which being once obtained, we shall enjoy all other blessings as co-essential with it.

Is Power the object of thy Wishes? Thou shalt be there (as the Apostle assures) co-heir with him, to whom all power in heaven and earth is given. Is Honour or Command thy chiefest Good? It is so liberally dispensed to all the inhabitants of ETERNITY, that the Prophet *David* seems to charge God with prodigality in that particular, when he cries out, *Nimis honorati sunt amici tui, Deus; nimis confortatus est principatus eorum!* My God, thy friends are too much honoured, their Principality is too much strengthened, or established! Dost thou desire Fame or Riches? Behold, the same Prophet telleth thee, *Gloria & divitiæ in domo Domini*, Glory and Riches are in the house of God. Art thou delighted with the magnificence of Royal Feasts? The King of kings hath by his onely Son sent down from heaven, invited all Mankind to a delicious Banquet in his Eternal Palace, where having seated all the guests that come upon his invitation, according to their several degrees, himself will minister unto them. Is thy heart ravished at the sight of some accomplished Beauty? Those who reside in that Eternal mansion, out-shine the Sun in greatest height of all his glory.

In fine, whatever else it is that doth delight thee, shall there be present; because all thy souls faculties, which can
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find nothing in this inferiour world but is too mean and narrow for them, shall there be fully satisfied, according to the large extent of all their powers, being absorp't in contemplation of the first Truth, and the enjoyment of the chiefest Good: and yet all this shall be, not by the various diversity of several objects, but by their blessed admission to the presence of God himself, who being the First cause, contains eminently the perfection of all other beings, in the simplicity of his own nature, communicating freely all his excellencies to those happy persons, who are made partakers with him in the infinite and indivisible Eternity.

Having considered the vast diversity there is between Eternity and Time, by reason of the infinity of the one, and the straight limits wherein the other is shut up and circumscribed; the entire firmness of the one, and the minute parts wherewith the other is divided: It follows that we should raise our thoughts unto the contemplation of those excellencies which an Eternal Being hath, by the comparing of it unto that which we enjoy during the succession of Time.

Those who employ themselves in quest of that, which we call vulgarly *The Philosophers Stone*, have not as yet found out the way of fixing *Mercury*; which is the cause they fail in their attempts of making Gold, notwithstanding the many laborious and chargeable experiments have been used for the effecting of it. And all that have endeavoured to establish their Contentment in the perishable goods of this inferiour World, have found themselves deluded by their hopes, because they were not able to fix the fleeting instants of the present time, whose continual motion is, of all other things, most destructive unto the happiness of life.

What an uncomfortable Voyage would that man have, who were bound out in quest of some particular Wave, ith midst of the *Atlantick* Ocean! how improbable that he should make discovery of what he sought for! And how impossible to settle there, considering the perpetual agitation of the waters, in that restless element! And yet such is the fatal blindness which possesseth the greatest part of humane kinde,

kinde, that we consume our lives in seeking to finde out a permanent blis amid the various diversity of worldly things; though all our predecessors for above fifty Ages past, who have preceded us in that designe, have perished in it, without being able to inform us any thing, save onely this, That they have met with nothing in their severall wanderings but Vanity, nor reaped ought but the Vexation of their spirits; and that Times course (as certain, though not so rapid as that of the Ocean) faileth not to ravish from us all those pleasing objects, in the pursuit of which we entertain our lives, and fancie in the obtaining of them a Contentment, which is nowhere to be found, but in the happie Region of E T E R N I T Y.

That harmles Innocence which is the precious treasure of our Childhood, is violently snatched from us by the heat of Youth, that inconsiderately engagerh us to seek Contentment in satisfaction of our Lustful Appetites: and when the access of years and judgement at Mans estate, hath made us see the vanity of that employment, Ambition, Pride and Covetousness present us with the specious Baits of Honour, Power, and Riches, and train us by those sweet allurements from contemplation of E T E R N I T Y, to employ the strength and vigour of our age in purchase of them, as if they could bestow true happiness on their possessors; until at last (if death prevent us not before) we finde our selves arrived at the utmost period of life (Old-age) where though Experience discover to us the true nature of all those transitory things we first admired, yet we can reap no other fruit of all her Counsels, but onely Sorrow and Despair, when we consider the grossness of our errors and miscarriages in the time past, and the impossibility of amending them in that to come.

And hence it is the Royal Prophet *David* takes occasion to reproach Mankind of dulness and heaviness of heart, that quitting the onely necessary thought and study of Eternity, give themselves over unto the love of vanity, and the pursuit of lies: *Filii hominum, usquequo gravi corde, ut quid diligitis vanitatem, & queritis mendacium?* As who should say, You sons of men, how long will you permit your hearts and your affe-

affections to be weighed down by the inordinate solicitude for earthly things ? Behold, the Pleasures which you love and court for satisfaction of your Youth, are onely vanity ; and those more solid employments you search after for the entertainment of your Elder years, are but a lie ; promising Contentment, and giving nought but Care, Vexation, and Repentance.

If *Julius Caesar* could have foreseen that all his Victories and Triumphs whereby he subjected unto himself the *Roman* State, (that proud Mistress of the then-known world) would but have served to make him fall a glorious Victim in the Senate-house ; he had not prosecuted certainly with so much ardour as he did, the cutting off all those, who opposed themselves to the accomplishment of his ambitious designs. King *Pyrrhus* had sure followed the counsel of his friend, and betaken himself unto the quiet pleasures of a peaceful life, had he been well informed that all his thoughts of Conquests, and the enlargement of his Empire, should perish together with himself, by the hands of a weak Woman, in the attempt he made to surprize the Citie *Argos*. *Saladine* (that great Victorious Sultan of the East) would not have spent his life amid the toyl and dangers that attend a Martial employment, had he but thought at first, as he did afterwards, at the hour of death, that he should carry nothing of all the Spoils and Riches he had gotten away with him, but onely a poor Shirt to shroud his carcase. The Rich man in the Gospel would not have joyed in his full Barns and Store-houses sufficient for the expence of many years, had he but known that he should never live to see the birth of the succeeding morn.

In fine, the business of the World would cease, and we should look, with horreur and aversion upon those gilded follies, and pleasing vanities, in quest whereof we spend our lives, disturb the elements, and alter the whole frame of Nature, were but their Mask pulled off, and we made sensible of that which is confirmed unto us by the experience of all our predecessors, to wit, that there is nothing in this inferior world can give a satisfaction to our soul, whole frame

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is equal unto that of the Celestial spirits: and that, although (by an excess of Bestiality) we could so plunge our Souls in the mass of our terrestrial bodies, as to let up our rests upon the enjoyment of those things which are the object of our Senses; yet Age and Sicknes would, like unbidden guests, trouble the mirth of all our Entertainments, and Time (the absolute Commander of all Sublunary things) consuming by degrees the matter of them, would violently snatch us from their embraces, and put in execution that irrevocable Decree pronounced by God against material things, to wit, That whatsoever is composed of dust and ashes, shall again return unto it.

So that if we examine the true cause of things, we may conclude, that the ill conduct of our lives, and all the miseries, vices and disorders that flow from thence, are an effect of the continual motion of Time; which representing unto us these exterior objects, under several disguises, keeps us from penetrating into the true nature of them; and suggesting to our deluded mindes vain hopes and fears, doth by those false alarms disturb our Reason, and brings upon us forgetfulness of what is past, a mistake of what is present, and a gross negligence, in not providing of our selves for what's to come.

For remedy hereof, Antiquity was used to set up Tropies and Monuments of all great and vertuous actions, as also to expose the bodies of Malefactors who were executed, unto the publicke view, on Poles, or Gibbets, that so posterity being put in minde of what had past, might be invited to imitate the one, and avoid the other. King *Philip* (father of the Great *Alexander*) gave command unto a Page of his, to wake him daily with this Admonition, That he should call to minde he was a Man; fearing lest he might otherwise be so far forth transported by the false lustre of his Greatness and Prosperities, as to mistake (which his Son after did) what himself was, and forget the condition of Humanity, where in he had been placed by God and Nature. And (the great Doctor of the Church) *St. Jerome*, thinks it a matter of that consequence for us to employ our selves in the consideration

tion of what is future, that he assures us confidently (by warrant of the sacred Scripture) we should never sin, did we but carefully ruminate on the last things that do attend us : *Memorare novissima tua, & in aeternum non peccabis.*

See here the true condition of our being during the succession of Time. Let us now alter the Scene, and from this Theatre of Confusion and Disorder, raise up our thoughts into the Contemplation of ETERNITY. It is an Instant always present, never decaying; whose Infinity comprehends all Times, past, present, and to come; and whose simplicity presenting us at once with whatsoever can be good or perfect, united in their First Cause; (*the Divine Nature*) whereof (unless our sins debar us from his sight) we shall be then made glad beholders, clears up the foggie Mists of Ignorance, of Forgetfulness, and of Mistake, which hang between our Understandings, and the truth of things; fills all the powers and faculties of our Souls, with the enjoyment of their desired objects, and doth establish us in the secure possession of our bliss, beyond the reach of Fortune, or of Time, which shall not there have power to traverse our Contentments, with the desire of ought that's past, or the apprehension of ought to come.

When we have once maturely weighed these solid Truths, we shall begin to loath this Prison of our bodies, subject to the perpetual injuries of Time, and Death; and shall cry out with the Apostle : *Infelix ego homo, quis me liberabit de corpore mortis hujus ?* Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body which belongs to death ? And with the same Apostle, fixing all our affections and thoughts upon ETERNITY, we shall continually desire to be dissolved, that we may live with Christ in his Eternal habitation. And when we shall receive the Summons to dislodge hence, brought us by Age, Diseases, War, Famine, Pestilence, or any other Officer of Time, clad in the hideous dress that Death can wear; we shall with joy prepare our selves unto the journey, and with the Prophet David say, *Letatus sum in his via dicta sunt mihi, In domum Domini ibimus* : I am rejoiced

in that which hath been said unto me, We will go into the house of God.

It seems (being a man according unto Gods own heart) he had well studied the nature of that Celestial mansion, whose qualities he doth so excellently describe in the two following verses: *Stantes erant pedes nostri in atriis tuis Jerusalem, Jerusalem quæ edificatur ut civitas, cuius participatio ejus in ipsum*: Our feet were standing in thy courts, Jerusalem. Here, they are running, forced to accompany the motion of Time; but they shall there be fixed in an eternal rest, never to be disturbed by Time or Fortune. *Jerusalem* that is builded as a Citie, whose portion consisteth in the thing it self. All other places are but Innes, where we are entertained as passengers during our Pilgrimage, and therefore have their buildings subject (as are those they harbour) unto decay and ruine: but this Citie being the permanent place of our abode, hath its foundation laid upon the never-fading Basis of ETERNITY. And if you ask, What is the stock or treasure of the inhabitants in that blessed Country? Herewith tells us that their portion consisteth in the thing it self. What is the thing it self? but that which is without dependance upon any other. And what is that? but he who being to declare himself unto the Patriarch *Moses*, said, *He is, be that is*; even God himself, in whom is comprehended the fulness of all Being, and without whom is nothing but the privation of Good and Happiness.

Let us endeavour then so to comport our selves, that we be not engaged amid these fading transitory things, but may be able to say with the Apostle, *Our life is laid up with Christ in God*. And let our onely Traffick and Negotiation be, to hoord up treasures (according to the counsel of our blessed Lord and Saviour) where neither rust nor moths can come to waste them, nor thieves break in to steal them from us. We need not be to seek where that should be, since he informs us that 'tis in Heaven, the onely proper seat and mansion of ETERNITY.

In the precedent discourse I have endeavoured to describe (although imperfectly) the nature and condition of Eternity, which is the true and proper habitation of our souls, who have no commerce with Time, but onely by their union with our bodies: a blessed Country, but such a one as doth not equally agree with all Constitutions: to some, it is an Ocean of pleasure, rest, and happiness; to others, an Abyss of everlasting horror, trouble and confusion. The reason of which difference proceeds from the diversity of those several dispositions and affections we carry with us at our parting hence. For the clear understanding whereof, it is necessary that we consider the nature of our souls, and examine what are those things which subsist in and together with them, after the dissolution of our bodies.

The Heathen Philosophers, guided onely by the light of Nature, did (some of them) believe the soul of Man to be immortal: they perceived well, that she was capable of many operations, even in this life; without the mediation of the body: that she gave a being within her self, unto an infinite number of things, abstracted from the several notions of time, place, figure, or any other property incident unto material things; which kinde of being, because it sorted not unto the things themselves in their own nature, they must necessarily receive from her: and they did thence infer, that she could not communicate such a being unto them, unless she had an immaterial being in her self: they saw the act of Judging was an action purely her own, whereby she produced several Conclusions (which are new Beings) out of those Premises that present themselves to our Imaginations. And knowing the infallibility of this Argument, *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, That of nothing there comes nothing; they were fully satisfied the Soul had a being independent of the body, since it was able to communicate a being unto other things, without the help of any Organs which depend upon her.

From the assurance of her Being, they collected also her Immortality: for having by the strict observation of all natural causes, found out that nothing whatsoever could lose
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its former being, and acquire a new one, (which we term Death in living creatures) but by Division ; and that that same could happen but two ways , viz. either by dividing the matter from the form, or by dividing the matter within it self : they inferred thence , that since both these ways were incompatible with the Soul , she was not capable of a real Change, and consequently not of Death , (which of all others is the greatest.) Not the first, because that she is immaterial ; nor the second, because she is a pure form , and that all forms are by their being so, incapable of division, of increase, or diminution, according unto these two Maxims among them , *Forma non suscipit majus & minus* ; and this other, *In indivisibili non fit mutatio*.

Upon the same Grounds also they inferred , that all the Resolutions or Judgements , and all those Sciences and Arts, whether Speculative or Practick , which are in the soul during this life , shall remain also in her after separation from the body ; these being things which depend onely on her, and which are (in a kinde) part of her self , so as without them she would lose something of the perfection of her Being.

And to conclude, because they saw nothing among all the works of Nature, which did not at some time or other (unless 'twere hindered by exteriour causes) attain unto a fullness and maturity, whereby it was enabled to reach that end for which it was ordained ; and found the Reasonable soul alone , which hath for the object of her Understanding the truth of all Natural causes, and their effects , was not able at any time during this life , wherein she is united with the body, to comprehend the utmost truth may be discovered in any Art or Science whatsoever : they thence inferred, that she was to enjoy a Being after the dissolution of the body, wherein she might at freedom exercise the power of Reasoning wherewith she is endued ; and not onely retain those Sciences she hath acquired here , but also be able to conceive all other Truth and Knowledge whatsoever, which may be deduced out of them, by that concatenation and dependance which the verity of one Proposition hath upon that of another.

I have deliver'd these speculations of the Philosophers with this brevity, without setting down the many Arguments used by them for proof of their Assertions, and Answer of the Objections have been fram'd in opposition to them, (wherewith whole Volumes might be fill'd) because they have been since, the most part of them, confirm'd unto us by the Tenets of Christian Religion; the truth whereof (being revealed by God himself) is not to be disput'd by Mankind. And I have taken this short view of the condition of our Souls, onely to this intent, that in the sequels of the ensuing Discourse, we may upon these Grounds be able the better to discover how far the ordinary working of Natural causes doth co-operate with the Divine Justice, in the Reward of Vertuous, and the Punishment of Vicious persons.

For the clear understanding whereof, we must know, that all living Creatures whatsoever (except Man) being destitute of Reason, suffer themselves without repugnancie to be directed by the Rules of Nature, (that is, the ordinary power used by God in governing the world) which doth sweetly guide them to the performance of those actions, and the obtaining of that end, whereunto they are ordain'd. But Man (whose portion is a Reasonable soul) assumes the Conduct of himself, and blinded by Self-love, or over-weening Pride, forsakes the general end of other things, (which is the honour and glory of their Maker) to pursue his own particular Good, and follow the inordinate affections of his own Corrupted nature. The true cause of which Mistake, is this that follows.

Those who have curiously search'd into the composition of Man, observe, that he may be consider'd in a triple capacity; according unto every one of which, he hath a severall Good that he proposeth unto himself, and endeavourth to attain unto during this life. The first is, as he is a living creature, compos'd of a material body, and a form that doth communicate unto it life and motion. The second, as he is endued with a Reasonable soul, capable of Discourse and Know-

Knowledge, participating thereby of the nature of Intellectual spirits; which placeth him in a rank above all the material creatures of this inferiour world. And the third, as he is the Workmanship of God, created by him out of nothing, after his own likeness; that he might serve him with obedience and perseverance, during his temporal being, and be the witness and partaker of his glory in ETERNITY. The Chiefest good of Man, according to the first, are Riches, and corporeal Pleasures, called by the Apostle *Concupiscentia carnis & oculorum*, Concupiscence of the flesh and eyes. According to the second, the vanity of humane Knowledge, accompanied with the forgetfulness of God; or the ambitious desire of obtaining Power, Honour and Command, called by the same Apostle *Superbia vite*, Pride of life. Those who consider him according to the third capacity, esteem their Chiefest Good to consist in the uniting of their wills with God, and in procuring the advancement of his glorious Name.

Now the vast distance there is between these ends which men propose unto themselves, causeth the great diversity we see daily between them in the direction and conduct of their lives; each one desiring to obtain the object of his Wishes, by actions suitable unto it: those of the first rank abandoning themselves to sensual lusts, forget the dignity of Humane nature, and abase themselves down to the rank of Beasts. Those of the second, denying to acknowledge him from whom they have received all those advantages wherein they glory, imitate the devils in their pride, ingratitude, and rebellion against their Maker. Those onely of the third rank, entering into the true knowledge of themselves, and of the end for which they were created, submit their wills unto Almighty God; and endeavouring to imitate the Angels in their prompt obedience, make themselves, during this life, fit to enjoy their society after the dissolution of their bodies.

From the great contrariety of mens Judgements; Resolutions, and of the actions and habits that flow from, and are acquired by them, ariseth the different condition of our souls when they are separated from our bodies. The Coral we see daily, grows in the Sea; and I have read, that being under water

water, it may (by reason of its softness) be moulded into any shape or figure whatsoever; but being once exposed unto the open air, it forthwith hardens, and is no more capable of change and alteration. The like happeneth unto our Souls, who while they do continue in this Sea o' th' world, are susceptible of the different affections of Good and Bad, according to the several appearances of things, which working on our senses, incline our Wills unto the following or forsaking of them: but having once finished their voyage here, must always wear the dress of those affections they have at parting received, and reap their Harvest in Eternity, suitable unto the seeds they have sowed here; according to that saying of the apostle: *Quaecumque seminaveris homo, eadem & metes*, Whatever a man hath sowed, the same also he shall reap.

Let us examine the condition of one who hath abandoned himself unto his Sensual lulls, and placing his Chief good in them, hath employ'd all the affections and faculties of his soul, in compassing those objects of his wishes: his stock of time is now exhausted, whilst he endeavoured onely to be amuse with the variety of choice delights; and Death finding him busie in the caressing of his body, hath violently snatched from him. The stately Palaces, vast Treasures, and ravishing Beauties, whereof he thought himself the owner, are now in the possession of another; and the poor Soul is exposed naked, upon the confines of ETERNITY. Let her with the eyes of Contemplation accompany her thither, and see what are her thoughts, what are her entertainments in that Country, wherein as yet she is a stranger. This rude Alarm hath roused her now out of that pleasing slumber wherein sheretchlessly consumed the time allotted her to labour, and she is come unto the land of rest, wherein she must for all ETERNITY subsist upon the Stock she hath bought with her. She now begins to take a view thereof; and summing her Accounts, she finds, that all her large Possessions, sumptuous Buildings, Friends, and Riches, have parted with her at the hour of death; that all her Pleasures are vanished like a dream; that her Body, for whose solace and delight

delight all these were coveted, is mouldring into dust and ashes; and that, in fine, of all that she hath done, of all she hath seen, suffered, or enjoyed, there remains nothing to her, but her own inordinate judgements and affections, which like a raging fire burn her without consuming, while all her powers and faculties are racked incessantly; while she considers the excellencie of what she hath forgone, the unworthiness of what she hath pursued, and the impossibility to retract her choice.

All that which a most violent passion is able to produce in the most capable subject, is nothing, in comparison of her afflictions. We read that *Pompey's* wife (she who was daughter unto *Julius Caesar*) died suddenly with the excess of grief caused by the love she bare unto her husband, upon the sight of but of a bloody garment which she knew had been that which was worn by him: And if we may believe the Poets, that the same Passion drew *Orpheus* to hell, among the Ghosts and Fiends in search of his *Euridice*, as being company much more supportable unto him, than were his Cares and Sorrows occasioned by her absence. But alas! what comparison is there between the cause of their afflictions? They sorrowed for their separation from those they loved but for a time, as he was well assured, that although time would not restore life to those he had lost it; yet he would certainly unite them in their loves, by giving death to those that sought it: whereas **ETERNITY**, (though infinite and boundless) cannot in all the vastness of its extension, furnish this Soul with the least ray of hope, that she shall meet again with those delectable pleasures wherein she had established her Comfortment.

The miseries we suffer during our union with our beloved have ever with them this double Comfort, viz. that either they themselves will change their nature, or we change our opinions touching the nature of them. The course of this world we see is variable; and we may probably imagine, that our Joys have passed, so also will those things that do afflict us; or else, that the acquaintance we shall make with misery, will in time so far alter the nature thereof, that

shall be no longer troubled at it. The strongest Poisons do, in tract of time, become natural Food to those that are accustomed to them : as heretofore, we read, it happened unto that King, from whom we have the name and use of *Mithridate*. Whereas the miseries of an Eternal condition can never receive ease by any alteration, either in the things themselves, or in the mindes of those that suffer them ; because Eternity is nothing else but a fixed instant, always permanent ; and Time is so essentially necessary unto Change, that it cannot be wrought but by its means ; according to the before-recited Maxime, *In instanti non fit mutatio*.

The Torment which *Mezentius* (mentioned by *Virgil* in his *Æneids*) used to his Captives, hath some imperfect weak resemblance of this poor Souls condition. That Tyrant used to fasten them unto dead bodies, joyning their hands, their feet, their mouthes, their eyes, and all their other parts, with those of putrid carcases. Let us consider what were the thoughts of those poor miserable wretches, who though living in themselves, were by this union hindred from exercising any the actions of life ; and notwithstanding their natural aversion from stench, from rottenness, and from corruption, were yet forced to converse onely with them ; exchanging all the happiness of life, to entertain those dismal objects, which presented them with nought but ghastliness and terrour.

That unto which those wretches were compelled by outward violence, is an imperfect representation of what happens to this soul by her depraved habits and affections. She hath made choice of bodily delights and pleasures, as her chiefest good : she hath employed, during her life, the faculty of her Understanding in the contemplating, and that of her Will in the enjoyment of them. The often reiteration of these acts and judgements, have powerfully imprinted them within her ; and being thus disposed, her temporal union with the body hath been dissolved, and she's become a dweller in ETERNITY, where (as I have already shewed) she is not capable of alteration. She very well perceives the base unworthiness and vanity of those delights, and the im-

possibility of ever coming to enjoy them ; but cannot
her inclinations to them ; which not permitting her to ex-
ercise her faculties on objects worthy her self, fill her with
notions of earthly, fading, and corruptible things ; where-
(beginning to be now sensible of her own natural perfecti-
ons) she cannot cast a thought, but doth replenish her with
horror, with confusion, and affrightment.

The condition of a Soul puffed up with the pride of hu-
mane Knowledge, or the ambitious desire of Power and
Command, after her separation from the body, is yet more
deplorable than that of the other. The failings of the
one, have proceeded from a gross ignorance of the true God
who was to be followed, and from a soft compliance with the
body ; whereas this other hath offended out of Malice, and
Contempt of the First Cause, from whom she hath received
her being : the one is to be looked on as a simple Malefactor,
whereas this other cannot be considered but as a Traytor and
a Rebel, who hath attempted to invade the rights of her
Creator, and endeavoured to finde out a Wisdome, and dis-
turbish a Power, which should be independent of him. These
Passions are proportionable unto the Causes from whence they
spring ; so as if the one give her self over to the weak Pas-
sions of Grief and Lamentation, this other falling from the
height of her ambitious pretences, must needs abandon her
self unto Despair, to Rage, and Fury. She hath been so
blinded during this life by the opinion of her own wisdome
and sufficiencie, or dazzled with the false lustre of her dig-
nities and power, that she refused to stoop to the Divinity
and acknowledge him the onely giver of them : she hath
therefore proposed her self unto her self, as the main End of
all her actions ; and having thus established a Chief Good
opposite unto that of all the other creatures, and settled in
her self the notions and affections thereof, she hath been se-
parated from the body, when coming to discover the true na-
ture and cause of things, she findes, that all things which
have a being depend on God, as the First cause, and are wil-
lingly subordinate to him as the End for which they were
created : That her self is like a Prodigie in Nature, whom

all the other creatures exprobrate with this her vile Ingratitude, Treason, and Rebellion against their Maker. What can she do, having thus proudly contemned her God, and being her self forsaken and detested by all other things, but seek out a retirement in her self, where her proud thoughts, despoiled of that false Greatness they had fancied, feed her continually with Envie, Rancour, and Despight, against her fellow-creatures and the Deity.

Her case (in my opinion) hath some resemblance with that of *Bajazet* King of the *Turks*, he who was overcome and taken prisoner by the great *Tamerlane*. This proud Prince saw himself master of the better part of *Asia*; and having swallowed in his ambitious thoughts the Monarchy of the whole world, had besieged the *Grecian* Emperour in his Imperial Citie, which he was upon the point of taking: but in the midst of all his flattering prosperities, he was invaded by this *Tamerlane*, who having defeated him in a great Battle, caused him to be shut up in an Iron-Cage, wherein being inclosed, he exposed him unto the mockery of all his Army, and used him as a Footstool to tread upon, whensoever he had an occasion to get on horseback. What were the thoughts of this proud Tyrant, who having lately had the disposal of a World of men, and being regarded by them as a Deity, was suddenly become the scorn of Boys and Lackeys; and having formerly fancied to himself the Empire of the world, was forced to serve another as his Footstool? All his past Greatness, Power, and Prosperities, had now no other being, but in his Memory; where they were always present, not to give ease to his Afflictions, but to increase the anguish and trouble of them, by inspiring him with thoughts of rage and fury against God and men, by whom his Expectations had been so foully disappointed.

Such, we may fancy to our selves, are the Ravings of this poor soul; though with this difference, That *Bajazet* was able to avoid the trouble of them, by dashing out his brains against the Iron-bars of that his Prison; whereas this soul can never quit her self from being persecuted by those stings of Conscience she carries with her as her torturers for all Eternity.

Alas!

Alas ! how imperfect is that apprehension we have of the acts which a Soul exerciseth after her separation from the body, by comparing them unto those we are capable of during this life ? He that should estimate the motion of the *Primum Mobile*, according to what he sees performed here by a Snail, would not fall shorter in his conception of the rapid Swiftneſs wherewith that Sphere is whirled about this Globe of Earth, than we ſhall do in ours, if we reſemble the affections of Joy and Grief, which we have here during the union with our material bodies, to thoſe a Soul hath when ſhe is ſeſvered from it : whether we ſhall conſider her huge Activity, when ſhe is purely an immaterial ſubſtance, in comparison of what ſhe hath when ſhe is clogged with fleſh and bloud ; or the perfection of her operations, when ſhe beholds clearly the things themſelves in their own natures, without help of thoſe *Idea's*, or imperfect representations of them in our Fancies, which we are forced to uſe during this life ; or laſtly, the exemption from time and place, by which our actions here are all reſtrained, but can have no commerce at all with her, who is above the reach of Time, becauſe of her Eternal being ; nor can be circumscribed by Place, as having neither Quantity nor Matter. The affections of Joy and Grief, as they reſide in the Intellectual appetite of man, are but impulſes of our Wills upon our other faculties ; which carry us on to the enjoying of the one, or ſhunning the other, with more or leſs violence, according to the meſure of the impreſſion we receive touching the good or evil of them : the force whereof depends upon the active motion of the ſoul ; and therein, that of one ſeparated hugely ſurpaſſeth what ſhe hath here, while ſhe is mingled with the maſs of our terreſtrial bodies.

Powder, whereof we have the daily uſe, when it remains united in the maſs whereof it is compoſed, is eaſily reſtrained by the weak cloſure of a Tun or Barrel ; but if it once take fire, will cauſe an Earthquake, and ſhake the frame of Nature, if it be hindred in its courſe towards the Region of Fire, which is the proper centre whereunto it tends. The ſoul hath ſome reſemblance unto this : her paſſions or impulſes during
her

her union with the body, are weak and feeble ; but being once divided from it, she then hath an activity surpassing that of Fire, which makes her passions or impulses become so strong and violent, that they bear no proportion at all with those which we have here ; and enjoy nothing common with them, but their application. Their force is also very much increased, by the clear sight she hath of things in their own natures, without the help of any *species* drawn from the things themselves, or the conversion of her self unto the Phantasms.

From whence ariseth the certainty of Knowledge, incompatible with Doubt, or with Opinion (which are the greatest enemies to Action) since no man ever vehemently covets or fears a thing, of whose nature he is uncertain. And lastly, they are beyond measure heightened, by the exemption from Time and Place, which she enjoys during her state of separation ; whereby she comprehends (after a sort) all Time and Place within her self. A little time, and a small space, are capable onely of little alterations. We are not sensible of the falling of one drop of water ; whereas in time, it hath the force to pierce the hardest Marble. And the Sun-beams, which being divided into sundry places, have scarce the power to warm us, do (when they are united by a Glass) become a fire that burns and scorseth.

What shall we say then of a Passion, which hath E T E R N I T Y, and an Infinity of place, for bounds of its continuance and situation ? All degrees of Comparison are here exceeded ; and we must needs acknowledge, that all the miseries whereof a man is capable during this life, are a meer nothing, in respect of what these wretched, wretched souls are forced to suffer towards the expiation of their crimes, for all Eternity.

What I have here set down, hath been to explicate the miserable state of those unhappie souls during Eternity (according to the ordinary course of Natural causes) who deviating from the true Good, for the enjoyment whereof they were created, have pursued their own vicious inclinations and:

and affections, in stead thereof. But who is he that can be able to discover the Immense greatness of those Punishments which the strict Justice of an offended Deity will inflict upon them, for their ingratitude against him? Here all expression is dumb; and we much needs acknowledge, our hearts are too too narrow to comprehend the vast Abysses of his Judgements, as well as the overflowing Torrents of his Mercies. Yet since Himself hath by his onely Son sent down from heaven, been pleased to communicate something concerning them unto Mankind; I shall with reverence draw neer, and without prying curiously into the hidden secrets of them, attempt to take a short imperfect view of the proceedings which the Divine Justice will order to be made against these malefactors, for the condigne punishment of their offences.

How deplorable is the condition of these souls, according unto what I have described already! and yet how happy were it, in respect of what it is, were they but left alone, to be tormented onely by themselves? For they have scarce begun to make a sad acquaintance with their miseries, when they are suddenly invironed with a multitude of Devils, whose ugly shapes cause an affrightment in them, equal to that of the employment upon which they come; and that is, to convey them unto the dreadful Judgement-seat of God. These Fiends do now begin to glory in the success of their temptations; and whilst they drag them to the place where they are to receive the Sentence of their Condemnation, practise upon them all those barbarous cruelties which an insulting merciless enemy can use against a captived wretch, delivered over to his rage and fury. They now have executed their Commission; and these poor guilty souls tremble with horror, to see themselves presented before the dreaded Majesty of him, whom having formerly rejected for their Advocate, and their Redeemer, they must now submit unto, as Judge of all their actions and deportments. Those rays of Glory which streaming from his sacred person, replenish all the Saints and Angels with unspeakable content and pleasure, fill them with an excess of horrour and despair, by making

making them reflect upon the innocence wherein they were created, the happiness for which they were ordained, the baseness and unworthiness of that for love whereof they have cast off the first and forfeited the later; the prodigious ugliness of those afflictions wherewith they are now filled in stead of them; and lastly, that all this must be proclaimed, and justified against them, before the dreadful Majestic of God, in presence of the Saints and Angels, by their own Consciences produced as witnesses against them; to their eternal shame and infamy: so that incompassed with a Legion of these torturing thoughts, as well as Devils, they know not whether of the two hath greater torment, either the expectation of the Sentence, or the execution of it.

And yet that same is wonderfully terrible: for they are thereby banished from the presence of Almighty God, and doomed to live in everlasting Fire, provided for the devil and his angels, from all Eternity. A dismal mansion, whether we shall consider the place it self, which is a region belching out perpetual flames, and yet covered with an impenetrable darkness; or the society of the inhabitants thereof, (who are the Devils, implacable enemies of Humane kinde) whose malice keeps them perpetually busied in the invention of new torments; whereby to adde unto the greatness of their afflictions; or lastly, their entertainments whilst they abide there, which (as the Son of God himself informs us) are weeping and gnashing of their teeth for all Eternity.

I shall not go about to reckon up the sundry kinds of Punishments inflicted there; on several persons, according to the nature of their several Crimes: the sulphurous Potions which the Drunkard shall there be forced to swallow down, in stead of the delicious Wines wherein he placed his greatest happiness; the Loathsome food wherewith the Glutton shall there be crammed, in lieu of his choice Feasts, and sumptuous Banquets; the Scorns, Indignities and Contempts to which the Proud ambitious man shall be exposed, in exchange of that Respect and Honour he sought for here: and all those different kinds of Tortures which the Divine Justice dispenseth with an admirable order, amid that horrour and confusion, ac-

According to the different Crimes whereof these souls have been guilty, those have already been copiously decyphered in other excellent Pens, and cannot be comprised by me within the compass of this short Discourse : nor do I comprehend how these material things may (by the ordinary course of Nature) work any alteration in the immaterial soul, when she is separated from the body : (for I speak nothing of her condition after the Resurrection, when she shall be again united to it :) but I must needs conclude her torments far exceed the force of humane understanding to conceive, when I consider the infinite Majestie of that God, for satisfaction of whose justice they are appointed ; the absolute unlimited power of him by whose order they are inflicted ; the incessant activity of a separated soul, by whom they are suffered ; and the endless continuance of E T E R N I T Y, during all which they are to be endured.

We have accompanied these miserable souls unto the brink of that Infernal lake, wherein whoever falls is irrecoverably lost for all Eternity : unhappie persons ! to have at all received a being, since they must there exchange the momentary pleasures they have enjoyed in giving satisfaction to their own unbridled Appetites, to live in everlasting flames, tormented by the devils, and the sting of their own Conscience, more cruel to them than those hellish Monsters amongst whom they are confined by the Divine justice, for their punishment and our example.

Let us now alter the Scene, and quitting these sad spectacles of horreur and affrightment, turn all our thoughts unto the contemplation of a soul, who, during life, hath proposed God unto her self as her Chief good ; and entering into a serious consideration of the unspeakable benefits she hath received from him, in her Creation, in her Redemption, and continual Preservation, hath (by an act of generous Gratitude) cast off all thoughts of Lust, of Vanity, or Pride, whereunto she was inclined by her concupiscences and affections, to sacrifice her self entirely unto the performance of his will and pleasure : the Divine grace (seconding these good dispositions)

ions) hath so illuminated her with the resplendent beams of heavenly light, that she hath been enabled to discover some little glimpse of those admirable perfections of her Creator, the sight whereof hath ravished all her powers, so that enamoured on his Celestial beauty, she hath conversed during her union with the body, onely in heaven; all her thoughts, wishes, and affections, being continually present there, where she had placed her onely treasure. Death, whose grim visage frights the most courageous spirits, is welcome to her; and she doth quit with joy the base attire of flesh, and of corruption, that she may put on immortality. Let us a little consider the blessedness of her condition, in this state of separation.

Knowledge, whose object is the true nature and cause of things, is so hard to be attained unto during this life, that the Philosophers (who have employed themselves in the search of it) have, a great part of them, despaired of being able to finde it out. The *Academicks* (a Sect of them much renowned in ancient time) pronounced boldly, that there was nothing whatsoever could be known. The *Scepticks* (proceeding something more warily) held that no demonstration could be made; and did therefore continue doubtful, denying their assent unto the truth of any Proposition. And those Philosophers who (following *Aristotle*) have established in our Schools a Form of Learning, do (by a Tyranny they exercise over our Reason) command us to admit, without proof, so many Grounds, or Principles, upon which they establish the Doctrine they deliver, that divers of our choicest modern Wits have thence taken occasion to dispute against them, and to endeavour the overthrowing of all that structure they have built upon them.

This inextricable Labyrinth, wherein Truth is shut up, being impervious by mortal men, caused *Socrates* (after all his study in the search of her) conclude, that he was ignorant of all things else, save onely this, That he knew nothing. And the despair of being able to finde her out, made *Aristotle* throw himself headlong into the Ocean, after he had long sought, in vain, to finde the reason of its Ebbings and Flowings.

But she, who doth so carefully conceal her self from the
 that live, exposeth freely all her beauties to be viewed over
 this separated soul, and fills her with the fulness of that know-
 ledge in one instant, whose smallest portion we scarcely gain
 by the continual study of many Ages. The contemplation
 whereof is a contentment infinitely surpassing all those plea-
 sures which we are capable of during this life. The Queen
Sheba, upon the same onely of *Solomon's* great wisdom
 thought it well worth her labour, to quit the pleasures of her
 Court, and exposing her self unto the trouble, toil, and dan-
 gers incident to a long voyage, came from the furthest part
 all the East to finde him out, that she might have the satis-
 faction to become a hearer of it. *Alexander* the Great prize
 at so high a rate those notions of Philosophy he had received
 from *Aristotle* during the time he was his Pupil, that he was
 led to say, he had a greater obligation to his Tutor, than
 his father *Philip*; and yet he had from him received his
 ing, and power sufficient to make himself the wonder of suc-
 ceeding Ages, by reason of his glorious Victories and Con-
 quests. And *Archimedes* (the great Artist) had all his power
 and faculties so wholly taken up by the contentment he found
 in speculating of those Demonstrations he had invented touch-
 ing the *symmetry* and proportion of Bodies, that all the rage
 and fury was practised at the taking in of *Syracusa*, and the
 destruction of those innocent inhabitants which peopled the
 unluckie Citie (whereof himself was one) could not drive
 him from the pleasure of it, or once afford him leasure to re-
 answer to a Souldier who asked his name, with an intention
 to have preserved him.

If this small dawn of Knowledge hath appeared unto the
 eyes of the beholders with so glorious a lustre, as made it
 preferable before the sumptuous Magnificences of a splendid
 Court, the glittering brightness of a Crown and Scepter,
 Life it self: What shall we say of that excess of pleasure
 wherewith this soul is filled, when she enjoys the fulness of
 all knowledge, and clearly sees the causes, nature, properties
 and qualities of all the workmanships of God? when she be-
 holds his admirable wisdom, power, and providence, and

cised in the continual upholding of this huge Fabrick ? and how from the great contrariety and strife there is between the parts whereof it is composed, he draws the preservation of the whole, by a perpetual Series of Generation and Corruption ? how Death, which seems to be ordained for destroying the Society of Humane kinde, is the main Basis whereupon it rests ; because the fear thereof withhold's vicious persons from falling headlong into the depth of wickedness, and the hope of it animates vertuous men to persist constantly in the rough craggie ways of Good and Vertue ? Those rare effects of Nature, that puzzle all our choicest Wits in searching out their hidden causes, are then made easie to her ; and she doth plainly understand, whether the Fluxes and Reflexes of the Ocean are guided by the motion of the Moon, or the impulse of that continual winde raised under the *Aequator* by the Sun : Whether that constant inclination of the Loadstone towards the North, whereby we are enabled to make discoveries of the remotest Creeks and Corners of the Sea, is caused by an attractive quality residing in the Poles of the Earth, which being somewhat different from those we fancie in the Heavens, produceth that small variation we observe daily in the Compass ; or by those streams of Atomes drawn by the Suns great heat between the Tropicks, which flowing evermore from North to South, and penetrating all the subtile pores whereof the Stone is full, while it remains within the earth in that position, doth in continuance of time beget this property ; which we can imitate by often heating of an Iron, and placing it to cool (while yet the pores thereof are opened by the fire) due North and South. Or lastly, Whether that quality, together with the power whereby the same is by a touch communicated to the Needle, and that whereby it attracts Iron to it self, depend on causes whereof as yet Mankind is ignorant ; whose knowledge is by providence reserved to the discovery of posterity, in that Age which shall succeed us, as the experience was to those in that which went before us. Whether the chearful Light, which we see darted by the Sun from East to West, is but a quality communicated by him in an instant to all the air, throughout the vast extent

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of our Horizon ; or is the Body of the Fire it self, which being the most active element, and flowing from the Sun as from its fountain, into the liquid element of Air, prevents by its vast distance from us, huge expansion, and active swiftness, our feeling and our sight from being sensible of any thing which might inform our understanding touching the measure of its heat and motion. Whether the never-ceasing turns we have of day and night, proceed from the perpetual motion of all the Heavens, carried about by the great violence of the *Primum Mobile*, or from the motion of the Earth on its own *Axis*, exposing all the several parts of it successively to be enlightened by the Sun. Whether the Planets are fixed each of them in a several Sphere, whose motion doth direct their Courses ; or (which some think they can demonstrate of the Sun) move all of them (except the Moon) upon their several *Axes*, like the Earth. How far their different Influences and Aspects govern all Sublunary bodies, causing the births and periods of States and Monarchies, and the particular happiness and misery of private men.

But above all, she is entirely satisfied with seeing how the Infallibility of Gods Prescience infringeth not the liberty of mans Free-will : How nothing here below happens by chance, but that his Providence, disposing sweetly all those things which he hath wrought, permits the miseries of good, and the prosperities of wicked men, for the advantage of his service, by exercising and instructing of the one, and by reclaiming of the other. And how, in fine, by the inscrutable *Meanders* of his Judgements, he ordereth so, that all the villany and wickedness is practised here, co-operates unto the good of his Elect, and the increase of his own glory.

In these employments she might with joy spend an infinity of time, were she not taken off by others, of much more delight and consequence : for she no sooner leaves Times region, and comes upon the confines of Eternity, but she's attended by a Troop of Angels appointed to convoy her unto the glorious Court of her Creator ; and she receives by them an Invitation is sent unto her by God himself, like unto that we read of in the *Canticles* : *Jam byems transsit, imber abiit*

& recessis; surge amica mea, & veni. My friend! the winter of thy chilling cares and fears is past, the showers of all thy tears are now blown over; arise therefore, and mount up unto the ever-blessed dwelling of Eternity. Who can express those extasies of joy this Summons causeth? or fancie to himself the least *Idea* of those pleasing raptures wherewith she is possessed, when she beholds the beauties of the Imperial heaven, which now stands open to receive her?

Those holy Saints, and pious men, who have endeavoured to inflame us with the love of Vertue, by hope of the reward to come, accommodating their expressions to our conceits, describe it to us like a spacious Citie built all of gold and pretious stones; whose gates are each of them composed of one entire Pearl; whose walls are made not for defence, but ornament, because her enemies are all destroyed, and she established in security, above the reach of Time or Fortune; whose houses are of Jasper and Porphyry, inlaid with Rubies, Diamonds, and Carbuncles; where Gold and polished Marble are not employed but for the meanest uses; every of whose inhabitants is a great King, and hath dominion over all the works of Nature; a beauty that outshines the Sun in greatest height of all his glory; an activity surpassing that of Lightning, accompanied with youth and health, which never shall decay for all Eternity: within the circuit of those walls they represent unto us a large field, beautified with all the choice variety of flowers that can be thought on, whose fragrant smell sends forth a most delicious Perfume to the Senses; in midst whereof, passeth a purling stream of living waters, which whose tastes, shall never thirst for all Eternity; where a continual Spring preserves all Plants in the full freshness of their prime and verdure: where an eternal day suffers not the least eclipse of night or darkness: there all the blessed dwellers in this heavenly country do entertain each other in perfect love and concord, with fulness of all joys and pleasures; whose compleat happiness can never be disturbed by the unwelcome presence of an enemy, or the sad parting of a friend.

What a meer Nothing are all the flattering shadows of Content we grasp at during life, being compared to those of this Cele-

Celestial mansion which I have here described ? And yet these are the outside onely of their joys, not to be prized at all, if once compared to that wherein consists the essence of their perfect blis and happines. Gold, Marble, Pretious Stones, fair Fields, cool Springs, the company of Saints and Angels, Sovereign power, Beauty, Activity, Youth, Health, Impassibility, and Immortality it self, can never satisfie the immaterial soul, without the vision of her Lord and Maker : this is the centre whereunto she tends, the object of her powers and faculties. This being once obtained, brings with it full repose and quietness ; which all created things can never do : and this is here communicated freely to her, whereby her understanding is fully satisfied with the clear knowledge of all things, by sight of him, who is both the first cause, and truth it self : her Will findes also here whatever object it desireth, in the secure possession of all good things, which are united in his nature, who is Good it self.

Who can describe the infinite advantages, prerogatives, and dignities, that do accompany this blessed vision ? Words are too feeble to expresse, and humane hearts (though ne'r so large) are too too narrow to conceive them.

Let us conclude, that as that man who doth partake of wisdom is truly wise, and who hath courage becometh valiant : even so this blessed soul, being ingulph'd in contemplation of the Deity, by the strict union which that causeth of all her faculties to him, is in some sort a God ; enjoying all perfections by participation, which God himself hath by propriety.

The CONCLUSION.

Reader!

HAVING finished these two first Heads of this Discourse; I to wit, A description of what ETERNITY is, and that our condition will be when we shall come to be partakers of it; there remained in the last place, that I should, according to my promise, have set down such Rules for conduct of our Lives, whilst we are here, as might (being observed) render us perfectly happy, when we should come to be inhabitants in that our country.

These Rules I meant should have comprised within them all the Vertues; which may be well reduced unto two Heads; that is to say, those which have for their object the Divinity it self, and those that serve for the well-ordering and disposing of our actions.

The principal ones of the first kinde, are those we call the Theological vertues; Faith, Hope, and Charity: whercof the first breeds in us a perfect resignation of our understandings unto God, by assenting with humility and constancy, without doubt or hesitation, unto those Truths which he hath pleased to reveal to us, for the salvation of our souls. The second makes us with patience and perseverance continue in the way of Vertue, expecting to be made partakers of all those blessings he hath promised to his servants. And the third causeth an entire union of our Will with his; which is the greatest height of Christian perfection, and the assured means to attain unto an everlasting Bliss.

Among those of the second kinde (being the Moral vertues) the chiefeest are, Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance, commonly called the *Cardinal Vertues*) which serve for the well-ordering and disposing of all the faculties, passions, and affections of our souls. Prudence, which ought to preside in all the consultations of our Understanding: Justice, to govern all the resolutions of our Will: Fortitude, to keep in due subjection the passions comprised under the general notion of

the Irascible part of man : and Temperance, to bridle the
orbitance of our Concupiscences and affections.

I had intended to have described at large the nature
the qualities of all these Vertues ; and to have shewed how
all the other may be deduced out of these Seven, by realising
the connexion and relation they have unto each other. As
I had meant, in the contexture of that Discourse, to have
down the way and means to purge our souls from all the
praved inclinations and habits which are opposite unto them,
that being thereby cleansed from the rust and filth of sin,
they might become capable subjects of being illuminated by
divine grace, and be enabled to discover his admirable good-
ness and perfections ; whereon being enamoured, they might
by fervent acts of Charity unite their Wills entirely unto his,
and thereby mount unto the top of Christian perfection, which
is the assured means of being happy in Eternity.

I say I had intended : for (although I had spent some time
in the digesting and ordering of this matter, yet) I was pre-
unto a stand in that designe, by a reflexion which I chance
to make upon a Saying of that glorious Saint, and Doctor
the Church of God, St. Cyprian, who writing unto some of
the *Ethnickes* touching the Lives and Studies of the *Christi-
ans*, (speaks thus : *Philosophi factis non verbis sumus ; nec magis
loquimur, sed vivimus* : that is, We are Philosophers in our
actions, not in our words ; nor do we speak great things, but
practise them. It seems this holy man thought it much bet-
ter for a Christian to exercise himself in vertuous actions, than
in describing the nature of the Vertues.

Now this opinion of so grave and reverend a Father of
the Church having at first caused me to doubt whether
I should proceed to perfecting the Work I had in hand ; I took
a resolution, some time after, to give it over, upon the reading
of a passage reported by some Writers in the Life of Origen
(that Prodigie of Wit and Learning :) they set down, that
being in his old-age sensible of divers errors he had run in-
to, (which made his followers be condemned as Hereticks) he
came into the Church, with an intention to expound some
passage out of the Scripture, for the instruction of the people

and to that purpose opening the Book, he chanced to light upon a passage in the Psalms of David, wherein the holy Prophet speaking of God, saith thus: *Pecatori dixit, Quare tu enarras gloriam meam, & assumis testamentum meum in os tuum?* In English thus: He (meaning God) said unto the sinner, Wherefore dost thou shew forth my glory, and dost assume my Testament into thy mouth? The penitent old man taking this reproof as spoken unto himself, burst forth into a flood of tears, which took from him the use of speech; and retiring out of the Church, abandoned all the thoughts of teaching others, that he might spend the short remainder of his life in the reforming of himself.

The Reasons which prevailed with this great Doctor, have wrought the same effect with me; and I resolved to quit the farther busying of my self in an employment, wherein I was forbidden to meddle by reason of my sins, and which I was unable to perform, because I am a stranger to the practise of those Vertues I should write of; and so might justly fear that inconvenience would thereby happen, whereof we are forewarned by our blessed Saviour in the Gospel, to wit, that if the blinde shall lead the blinde, they both will fall together in the pit.

Here therefore I give end to this Discourse, with this Advertisement onely unto the pious Reader, That if he shall desire to have his heart enflamed with the divine love, he must first necessarily cleanse it from all affections unto fading and transitory things.

Suetonius, in the Lives of the Twelve first *Cæsars*, relates, that when the body of the Emperour *Titus* was plac'd in the Funeral-pile, to be consumed with fire (according to the custom of those times) his heart (after his body was reduced to ashes) did many times spring out of the flames; and being at last opened by those, who wondred at the strangeness of the accident, it was found to be full of Poyson, which hindered the operation of the fire upon it. Even so our souls, while they continue fraught with the inordinate love of earthly things, (which are the mortal poyson of the soul) resist the inspiration of the holy Spirit, and suffer not themselves to be infla-

flamed by the Celestial fire of Charity, which he doth never fail to kindle in those hearts are fitted to receive it.

The readiest way for the devout Reader to effect this, is wholly to employ his thoughts and studies in the continual meditation upon Eternity; wherein if he be farthered by any thing which I have here set down, I then desire, that, as I have made him partaker of my Meditations, so he would also make me partaker with him in his Prayers.



FINIS.

